

The THOREAU SOCIETY

BULLETIN

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BULLETIN EIGHTY-FOUR

SUMMER, 1963

EXCERPTS FROM ADDRESS BY T. L. BAILEY, PRES. THE THOREAU SOCIETY

Methinks -- if I may begin with a favorite Thoreau locution -- methinks that it was an amusing anomaly to have chosen a business man as President of this Society, in view of Thoreau's bitter strictures about business. I have collected a few of them and doubtless will add to the list when I have finished reading all 14 volumes of the Journals. I am just now in the middle of Volume 6. Here are some of his anti-business comments:

"In my experience nothing is so opposed to poetry--not crime --as business. It is a negation of life." "There is no glory so bright but the veil of business can hide it effectively."

Yet Henry was on occasion somewhat of a business man himself. You will remember that when he was invited to be a contributor to the proposed Atlantic Monthly he wrote asking for the "rate per page (describing the page) you will pay for accepted articles returning rejected within a reasonable time and if your terms are satisfactory, I will forward something for your magazine".

Personally I am neither a failure or an outstanding success as a business man. Perhaps I have Thoreau to thank for the latter. It will be recalled that Robert Service, the Canadian poet, started out as a clerk in a bank and that when he found himself getting ahead too fast he read "Walden" again.

Thoreau must have turned over in his grave when this Society was formed, again when he was elected to the Hall of Fame, again when the elaborate ceremonies there were carried out and again when a business man became your President. If he reacts in the same manner in the face of the vast spate of far-fetched commentaries and fine-spun theories on his life and works, he must by now have been nicknamed "Whirling Henry".

Today I would like to say something about some of the commentaries and theories to which I have just alluded.

Let the embryo PhD.'s have their fun, and let the scholars talk to each other in their learned quarterlies. Let us forget the guesses of the biographers and the speculations of the psychoanalysts. Let us overlook the minutiae of the bibliographers and the explications and divagations of the exegetes. Let us bypass the non-comprehenders, the disparagers and the condescenders and ignore the readers-between-the-lines.

Let us go back to Thoreau's works themselves. He himself said, "If you would make acquaintance with the ferns, you must forget your botany". Browning swept all extraneous material aside with his famous ironic question, "What porridge had

John Keats?"

And speaking of "aesthetic distance", Thoreau knew all about this when he said he was interested in the hawks, but not in the length of their intestines.

But let us get back to some of the critical categories I have previously mentioned.

Take the comments of certain bibliographers on the punctuation of "Walden":

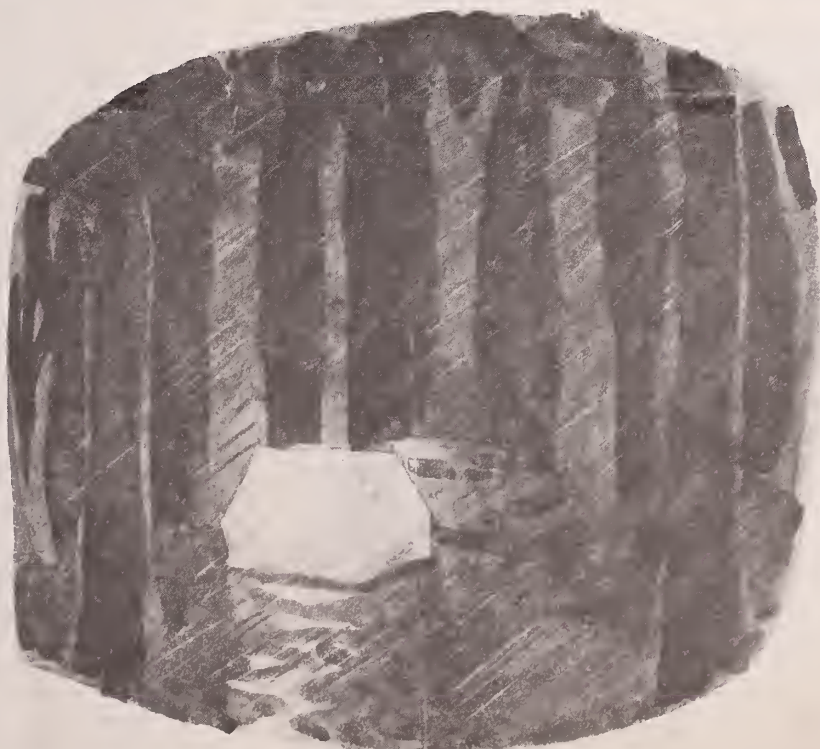
"Except as noted, punctuation refers to terminal and intra-sentence marks which are non-verbal and standardized in the written language (e.g., colon, semi-colon, comma, dash, parenthesis, period, exclamation point, question mark, quotation marks). Arbitrarily included as punctuation are: variation in

indentations, in spacing between lines, in spacing between paragraphs, and in the handling of quoted matter. Omitted are: variant readings involving the apostrophe and the decimal point, which are considered problems in spelling; variant readings involving capitalization -- except when the problem in capitaliza-

tion is clearly the result of how the sentence is otherwise punctuated; and variant readings involving hyphenation -- unless the problem in hyphenation happens by mere chance to be associated with other variations in punctuation".

Or take the process described in a word index to "Walden".

"The actual completion of the



"No, I would not care to hear a chapter or two of 'Walden'."

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word index was accomplished in the following manner. Bindings were cut from two identical copies of the selected edition. The lines on odd pages of one copy and on even pages of the other were underscored in pencil, numbered, and checked against the numbering in the master copy. Then the first line was cut from the page with scissors and placed atop a small stack of 3 x 5 inch cards. The top card was stamped with the appropriate page and line number. Next, the word was cut from its line with a razor blade and fixed to the card with Scotch Tape, etc. As a result of this procedure it was discovered, among other things, that the word "a" was used in "Walden" 2,781 times, the word "and" 4,237 times, the word "as" 1,116 times, the word "of" 3,225 times, the word "that" 1,199 times, the word "the" 6,750 times and the word "to" 2,743 times, and so on.

All of which prompts me to quote a poem by one Maurice B. Cramer entitled "To a Company of Scholars in English Literature" and published in the Atlantic Monthly many years ago, when poetry was still comprehensible, and before poets started talking to themselves, as Max Eastman has said. We are the brazen-bottomed ones In patient sedentary pants; We cut our cake with filing cards And count the commas of romance.

Our voices ever soft and low
With unction like a hierophant's,
We lave each word with amorous tongue
Anointing all the consonants.

With grasshopper garrulity
We sometimes gossip of the wrecks
The living make, of war and death
As pent-up schoolboys talk of sex.

We have no cheerful human lust,
Too timid for the genial bed,
But fumble in the startled dust
Of the unimpassioned dead.

And gender from this stale embrace
By concentrating all our skills,
A half-pint can for measuring
The yellow mist on Malvern Hills.

Take the famous non-comprehender, the anglophile Professor Barrett Wendell, who characterized "Walden" as "a vital bit of literature for anyone who loves to read about nature". In answer to this it is only necessary to quote a conversation, recorded by M. A. DeWolf Howe, between Wendell and Roger Merriman, known affectionately when I was in college as "Batty" and "Frisky" respectively. The conversation was as follows:

Batty: In all the twenty-five years you have known me, Roger, have you ever heard me utter one liberal sentiment?

Frisky: Not me, sir.

Batty: Thank God!

Incidentally, H. L. Mencken called Wendell's book from which I have quoted "arbitrary and ignorant but highly amusing".

What about the psychoanalysts? They like to speculate about such subjects as the nature and duration as Henry's vicarious post-traumatic syndrome at the time of his brother John's death. And one of our own members describes Henry in language suggesting a Concord Oedipus.

What about the biographers? They speculate as to whether Henry carried a torch for Lydian, who proposed to whom and when, and did Henry defer to John in the consecutive marriage proposals to Ellen Sewell, one of which is conjectured to have taken place on the beach in my home town of North Scituate, Massachusetts.

As to the condescenders, I refrain from discussing them but note at least one among our own membership.

The disparagers? Everyone is familiar with the wisecracks of James Russell Lowell and Robert Louis Stevenson. One of the lesser known of this tribe however, is A. C. Benson who, around 1906, said:

"But Thoreau was indolent rather than simple; and what spoils his simplicity was that he was forever hoping that he would be observed and admired; he was forever peeping out the corner of his eye, to see if inquisitive strangers were hovering about to observe the hermit at his contemplation He was forever looking at himself in the glass, and describing to others the rugged, sunbrowned, slovenly, solemn person he saw there The moment a man is conscious that he is simple and humble, he is simple and humble no longer You cannot become simple by doing elaborately, and making a parade of doing, the things that the simple man would do without thinking about them".

I have urged, let us go back to Thoreau's text itself. All right, here are two of his less familiar passages, and let us read them without worrying about the punctuation and Thoreau's mental and physical health at the time he wrote them.

"The wood thrush's is no opera music; it is not so much the composition as the strain, the tone -- cool bars of melody from the atmosphere of everlasting morning or evening. It is the quality of the song, not the sequence. In the peewee's note there is some sultriness, but in the thrush's, though beard at noon, there is the liquid coolness of things that are just drawn from the bottom of the spring. The thrush alone declares the immortal wealth and vigor of the forest.

Mr. Bailey also read Thoreau's description of snowflakes.

I must not fail to mention some of the disadvantages arising from too close a study of all the aspects of a writer's

life and times, as well as of his works. Let me give you a few more quotations:

William Hazlitt: A critic does nothing nowadays who does not try to torture the most obvious expression into a thousand meanings. We know everything about the work, but nothing of it.

Anonymous Chinese: With an X-ray we see all the bones but cannot see the heart.

T. S. Eliot: A mark of a literary man is that he can no longer read anything with pleasure.

This one is reminiscent of the one from New Yorker Magazine under their standing head "Words of one Syllable Department". The quotation is from a Bulletin of the Modern Language Association.

THE ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the Thoreau Society was held on Saturday, July 13, 1963, in the First Parish Church in Concord, Mass., with President T. L. Bailey in the chair. Selectman Robert Sheehan gave an address of welcome from the town of Concord. The secretary's report, as printed in Bulletin 80, was accepted. The treasurer read the following report:

On hand, July 26, 1962	\$1751
Annual meeting	59
Postage, etc.	385
Printing	980
Microfilm	111
Misc.	38
Total expenses	1573
Dues	1099
Life memberships	400
Gifts	28
Centennial surplus	239
Sale of photographs and back copies	191
Total income	1957
On hand, July 12, 1963	2135

Carl Bode, offered for the nominating committee the following slate of officers--president, Walter Harding; president-elect, Roland Robbins; vice-president, Mrs. Herbert Hosmer; secretary-treasurer, Walter Harding; members of the executive committee for three years, Reginald Cook and Brooks Atkinson. These officers were duly elected.

Mrs. Hosmer announced that the wild flowers decorating the pulpit had been gathered in Concord by Mrs. Mary Fenn. She also pointed out the special Thoreau exhibitions in the Concord Book Shop window and in the Concord Free Public Library.

T. L. Bailey delivered the presidential address which is printed above. Odell Shepard gave a fine address on the inspiration of Concord as a place.

At the luncheon, Mrs. Herbert Hosmer gave a brief report for the Save Walden Committee on the current status of Walden Pond. In the afternoon the members drove to Fruitlands in Harvard, Mass., where they toured the various museums, including the house where Bronson Alcott and his friends lived in 1843, and the Indian museum where Thoreau's collection of Indian relics was on exhibition--in many cases with his journal descriptions of the particular pieces found. Afterwards the members were the guests of Fruitlands Museum for refreshments on the terrace.

tion, and mentions our own Walter Harding:

"Dr. Harding surveys Thoreau's life, work, sources, and ideas and he provides for each topic a selected and rich bibliography. An invaluable aid to any Thoreau student and to those who read him with pleasure.

And let me close with two quotations of which I am particularly fond.

I agree with Louis Halle when he says "It is something to stand behind Thoreau's shoulder and sight the world along his extended arm".

And finally, I am in the same predicament as Frances West Brown when she says "I shall never be rid of Henry".

At the evening session at the First Parish Church, the Massachusetts Audubon Society presented its film "Our Wildlife Heritage," Roland Robbins and Edwin Way Teale presented a tape recording entitled "Thoreau Sounds," and Walter Harding read a chapter on "Thoreau and Women" from his forthcoming biography of Thoreau.

THOREAU BUSTS AND MEDALLIONS.

Malvina Hoffman, the sculptor of the Thoreau bust at the Hall of Fame, has recently produced a series of Thoreau medallions. There is a 1 3/4" bronze medallion for \$3.00; a 3" bronze medallion for \$6.00; and a 1 3/4" silver medallion for \$4.00. They may be ordered from Gimbels Coin Department, 33rd St. and Broadway, New York 1, N.Y.

Miss Hoffman has also created a 10" high exact replica in cast stone of the Hall of Fame bust and these may be ordered directly from Miss Hoffman at 157 East 35th St., New York 16, N.Y., for \$25.00 f.o.b. Since these orders are filled individually, the delivery will take some time.

ADDITIONS TO THE THOREAU BIBLIOGRAPHY...WH

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Burke, William J. and Charlotte Brooks. "A Walk with Thoreau: Cape Cod Revisited." LOOK, XXVII (July 2, 1963), 37-41. Picture essay on Thoreau.

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Decker, Richard. "No, I would not care to hear a chapter or two of 'Walden.'" NEW YORK TIMES. June 9, 1963. Cartoon, reprinted in this bulletin.

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Foerster, Norman. "Thoreau's Cabin at Walden Pond." PITTSBURGH DISPATCH. August 28, 1910.

Gullace, Giovanni. "WALDEN e l'umorismo di Thoreau." REVISTA DI LETTERATURE MODERNE E COMPARATE (Firenze), XIV (1961), 156-161.

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Harding, Waler. "Walden—Piec Interpretacji." TEMATY, II (Lato, 1963), 129-145. "Five Ways of Looking at WALDEN" trans. into Polish.

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Kasegawa, Koh. "Thoreau, 'Civil Disobedience' ni tsuite." AOYAMA JOURNAL OF GENERAL EDUCATION, II (November, 1961), 45-61. In Japanese.

Kleinfeld, Leonard. "Thoreau's Pursuit of Happiness." FRAGMENTS, I (April, 1963), 3. Moiles, Bill. "We Love Humanity Even When It Teems." WORCESTER TELEGRAM. July 4, 1963. On a visit to Walden Pond.

Schechter, Betty. THE PEACEABLE REVOLUTION. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963, 243pp. \$3.75. The story of non-violent resistance, tracing it from Thoreau, through Gandhi to Martin Luther King. Although written for young people, it is a thorough-going and well-written account of the spread of Thoreau's doctrine of civil disobedience that will appeal equally well to adults. Particularly of interest in the light of civil disobedience activities in the South today.

Temmer, M.J. "Rousseau and Thoreau," YALE FRENCH STUDIES, XXVIII (1961-62), 112-21.

Thoreau, Henry David. A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS. Sentry Edition. Review. THE SKIPPER, February, 1963, p.35

---. WALDEN, OR LIFE IN THE WOODS. Moscow, 1962. 240pp. The first translation of WALDEN into Russian since the Revolution.

---. THE RIVER. Review. CONCORD JOURNAL, July 4, 1963; NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, July 7, 1963.

---. ON THE DUTY OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE. London: Peace News Pamphlets, 1963, 21pp. With an introduction by Gene Sharp.

---. EXCERPTS FROM WRITINGS ON LIBERTY. Chicago: Norman Press, 1943. Produced by a class on typography taught by Norman W. Forgue at the American Academy of Arts in Chicago.

---. WALDEN, OR LIFE IN THE WOODS. Cleveland; Micro Photo, 1963. Duopage facsimile of first edition. \$18.25.

---. A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS. Cleveland: Micro Photo, 1963. \$20.75. Duopage facsimile of the first edition.

---. THE WRITINGS OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU. 20 vol. Cleveland: Micro Photo, 1963. \$293. Duopage facsimile of the Walden Edition.

---. THE RIVER. New York: Twayne, 1963. 244pp. \$4.50. A selection of Thoreau's comments on his his hikes, boating trips, and skating trips along the Concord rivers, arranged, edited and annotated by Dudley C. Lunt, and illustrated by Henry Bugbee Kane. An interesting selection that emphasizes just how large a part the rivers of Concord played in Thoreau's life. The illustrations by Kane, as usual, are outstanding.

Wells, Anna Mary. DEAR PRECEPTOR: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THOMAS WENTWORTH HIGGINSON. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963, 363 pp. \$6. Higginson has unfortunately been one of the most neglected minor figures of American Transcendentalism, but now at last he has received due recognition in a highly readable biography that has, incidentally, much to say about his relationship with Thoreau and his part in the development of Thoreau's posthumous fame. DEAR PRECEPTOR is one of those rare gems—a highly readable book that is obviously based on sound scholarship.

Willson, Lawrence. "Central Theme of Thoreau's Life Seen Relevant to 20th Century." UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA CLIP SHEET, XXXIX (July 30, 1963), 5.

I am indebted to the following for information used in this bulletin: J.Adell, C.Bode, H.Cahoon,

M.Campbell, R.Dickens, N.Foerster, G.Hosmer, S. Hirsch, C.Hoagland, P.Hackett, A.Kovar, D.Kamen-Kaye, K.Kasegawa, D.Moure, V.Munoz, J.Moldenhauer, R.Needham, E.Phillips, J.Sargent, R.Schaele, S. Smith, A.Schwartz, E.Smith, C.Tweedy, and P. Williams. Please keep the secretary informed of new Thoreau items as they appear.

A RECENTLY-DISCOVERED ADDITION TO THE THOREAU CORRESPONDENCE by Joseph J. Moldenhauer (University of Texas)

The letter transcribed below is mounted in a blank leaf at the beginning of Volume I of the University of Texas set of the 20-volume Walden Edition Writings. A special presentation leaf in the same volume identifies the set as one of 200 copies of the first impression, the purchaser as Miss Anna Craig, and the supply date as March 10, 1910. It seems likely that the manuscript was mounted after the books were delivered to the purchaser. All 20 volumes are presently located in the "Z" or limited access area of the University of Texas Library stacks.

The letter is written on a sheet of white paper bearing the partial watermark "JOY . . ." and measuring approximately 4 1/8 by 6 3/4 inches. On the reverse side, in Thoreau's hand, is a passage about the Concord elms which I am preparing for publication.

I would like to acknowledge the assistance and cooperation of Mr. Alexander Moffit, University Librarian at the University of Texas, who has given his approval to this publication; of Mrs. Marcia E. Moss of the Concord Free Public Library and Mr. James B. Thayer of Dedham, Mass., for biographical data on Sophia Ripley; of Mr. Walter Harding, who directed me to Alvah Low's transcripts of the Concord Lyceum records; and of Mr. James B. Thayer, Mr. John W. Ames, Mrs. Sophia Ripley Boyer, Mr. William Thayer Ames, and Mrs. Ethel Randolph Starr, descendants of Sophia Bradford Ripley, for their kind permission.

My dear Mr Thoreau

Mr Johnson¹ will spend the night at our house² tomorrow, and Mr Emerson and a few others are coming at six to take tea with him, and Mother³ wants you to come very much. We hope you will be able to.

Yrs respectfully
Sophy Ripley⁴

February 16 th⁵

Annotations:

¹The Reverend Samuel Johnson (1822-1882) of Salem, Mass. Johnson, an independent liberal minister, graduated from the Harvard Divinity School in 1846, left the Dorchester Unitarian church after a brief and controversial pastorate, and held a parish in Lynn from 1853 to 1870. He was a radical, a Transcendentalist, a writer of hymns, a lecturer, and the author of three books on Oriental religions (DAB, X, 119-120). On February 17, 1859, he lectured before the Concord Lyceum on an unspecified topic (Alvah H. Low, The Concord Lyceum, unpublished University of Virginia M. A. thesis, 1955, p. 100).

²The Old Manse.

³Sarah Alden Bradford Ripley (1793-1867), the wife of the Rev. Samuel Ripley, who died in 1847, the year after he returned to Concord with his family from Waltham. Samuel was the son of Ezra Ripley and a half-uncle of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Mrs. Ripley, one of the intellectual luminaries of the town (she had been tutor to Emerson), resided in the Old Manse until her death (Rusk, The Life of Ralph Waldo Emerson, passim; The Story of Concord Told by Concord Writers, ed. J. L. Swaine [Boston, 1906], p.152).

⁴Sophia Bradford Ripley, the youngest child of Samuel and Sarah Ripley, was born in Waltham on July 13, 1833. She married James Bradley Thayer of Boston in 1861 and died on January 24, 1914. Of Thoreau she said, according to Mr. John W. Ames via Mr. James B. Thayer, "that, though he lived on Walden Pond, he surely never bathed in it."

⁵Neither Emerson nor Thoreau, in journal entries and letters at this time, mentions Johnson or his lecture. Thoreau's father had died two weeks before Johnson's visit, and on the 22nd, five days afterward, Thoreau went "to Worcester to lecture in a parlor" on "Autumnal Tints" (Journal, Vol. XI, pp. 435, 453; Harding, "A Check List of Thoreau's Lectures," BNYPL, LII [Feb., 1948], p.86).

This bulletin was paid for by the life membership of G. Linnemann of LaPorte, Indiana. Life membership is twenty-five dollars.

MICROFILMS AVAILABLE IN THE THOREAU SOCIETY ARCHIVES

Carrying out the program adopted at the 1962 annual meeting, the Thoreau Society has purchased and placed on deposit in the Thoreau Society Archives in the Concord Free Public Library the following microfilms of Thoreau manuscripts:

The complete journal from the manuscript in the Morgan Library.

The Walden MSS (HM924), the corrected proof of Walden (HM925), the corrected proof of A Week (RB110229), Index Rerum (HM9450), Commonplace book (HM957), Journal fragments (HM933), Nature notes (HML3198), general phenomena for April (HML3203), journal fragments (HM931), miscellaneous observations (HM954), calendar for March (HML3202), journal fragments (HML3191), journal fragments (HML3182). All these manuscripts are described in greater detail in Bulletin 43.

Can anyone identify this quotation from Thoreau?—"Sometimes, we seem to hear a faint music from all the horizon. When our senses are clear and purified we may always hear the notes of music in the air--and catch its echoes dying away when we awake in the dawn. This is the tradition under various forms of all nations. The music of the spheres--the statue of Memnon etc.

The Thoreau Society, Inc., is an informal gathering of students and followers of Henry David Thoreau. Walter Harding, State University College, Geneseo, New York, president, secretary and treasurer; Mrs. Herbert Hosmer, Concord, Mass., vice-president. Membership \$2.00 a year; life membership \$25.00.